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RUEHEG/AMEMBASSY CAIRO 2068
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DEPARTMENT FOR PA, NEA/ARN, INR/IC/CD, INR/S:STHIBEAULT AND
JMCCARTER, VOA NEWS CA, NEA/PPD:CBOURGEOIS, DBENZE AND
AFERNANDEZ, IIP/G/NEA-SA RWINCHESTER
WHITE HOUSE FOR NSC
CENTCOM FOR CCPA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: KMDR PREL KPAO OPRC SY

SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Khaddam, Mubarak/Chirac Summit,
Lebanon, Palestinian Territories, Iraq (1/5)

¶1. Summary: Syrian papers today reported that the Finance
Ministry has frozen the assets of Khaddam's wife, sons,
grandchildren and their husbands and wives with the aim of

securing the sum which will be revealed by the judicial
investigation. The decision came in response to the deliberation
in the last session of the People's Assembly. During that
session, Syrian MPs asked to freeze Khaddam's assets and
investigate the sources of his money, in addition to the decision
of the cabinet to open Khaddam's corruption file.

Papers also reported President Mubarak's meeting with President
Chirac, saying that talks focused on the situation in the Middle
East, particularly Syria and Lebanon, quoting Jerome Bonnafont,
Spokesman for the French Presidency, who added "France calls on
all countries concerned to respect international resolutions and
offer full cooperation to the International Investigation
Commission."

On developments in the Palestinian territories, papers reported
a statement by Mofaz, Israeli Minister of War, that Israel is
ready to negotiate with Hamas if it wins in the Palestinian
election, provided that it abandons its arms and turns into a
political movement.

As for Iraq, papers reported that the Bush Administration does
not intend to request that Congress allocate funds for
reconstruction in Iraq and that the White House hopes that the
world community will contribute to this process.

End summary.

¶2. Selected Headlines:

"Seizure of assets of Khaddam, wife, sons and grandchildren"
(Government-owned Al-Thawra, 1/5)

"Lebanese criticism of declarations for aggravating tension with
Syria. Al-Hoss: Why the insistence upon acquitting Israel of the
assassination crimes? Lebanese scholar Fadhlallah: Lebanon is an
open stage for contradictions in accordance with US desires"
(Government-owned Tishreen, 1/5)

"Lebanese circles: Israel is the sole beneficiary of the repercussions of crimes in Lebanon" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 1/5)

"Mubarak and Chirac discuss the situation in the Middle East"
(Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 1/5)

"Palestinian elections: Israeli occupation will negotiate with Hamas if it wins in the Palestinian election, provided that it abandons its arms. Abbas denies any disagreement with Palestinian factions" (Government-owned Tishreen, 1/5)

"Palestinian militants break through the Rafah border crossing. The Palestinian Authority proposes collecting Palestinian factions' arms for the safety of the elections" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 1/5)

"Bush does not intend to request that Congress allocate funds for reconstruction in Iraq" (Government-owned Al-Thawra, 1/5)

"Scores of Iraqis killed in a series of explosions. Bush: Troops will be reduced at the end of the year if political and security progress is achieved" (Government-owned Tishreen, 1/5)

¶3. Editorial Block Quotes:

"The Hour of Truth Is Approaching"

Isam Dari, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, wrote (1/5): "President Bush's administration gives itself the right to interfere in the affairs of other nations and uses the United Nations to serve its own purposes.... The US Administration justifies deliberate killing as an element of the fight against terrorism, assassination crimes as acts of self-defense, and destruction of peoples and countries as a legitimate effort to / / /

spread democracy and freedom....

"In the age of American power, politics has become the art of lying and the ability to fabricate accusations and obliterate facts....

"We still remember the US lies about the Iraqi war.... The US is ready to repeat the same scenario against Syria....

"Today the picture is repeated and the scene remains the same: lies, fabrications, accusations, false witnesses who receive their 'wages' in advance, and a group of rancorous people, renegades from Arabism, and applauders of Washington and Tel Aviv -- all in a vicious onslaught against Syria in an attempt to harm it and its policies and national and pan-Arab positions because of its opposition to the American and Zionist plans."

"This campaign will not succeed.... We are not worried about Syria's future. We are not frightened by the threats and lies within this onslaught, despite its ferocity. This is because we count on a moment of truth that will inevitably come. Then, not only will Bush and his senior aides be compelled to admit mistakes and lies, but also all those pitiful ones who sold themselves to the devil in return for a handful of dollars and promises of posts and privileges that will never come."

"Culture of Chisels"

Khalid al-Ashhab, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, commented (1/5): "While military force can occupy and control lands, it cannot create a new culture....

"The United States has so far won its war on terror. It overthrew two political regimes by steel and fire. But despite steel and fire, it failed to establish an alternative cultural system in Afghanistan, Iraq, or even Russia....

"If American military power occupies Iraq and Afghanistan in full, and besieges other countries and societies, such as Russia, why are the power of American culture and the geography of its occupation confined to the Green Zone in central Baghdad, to the periphery of Karzai's palace in Kabul, and to Russia's outside border?

"Chisels cannot play the role of words. This means that multipolarism still exists in the fabric of international relations despite the ferocity of the 'democratic' American onslaught and despite the domination and hegemony of power....
"The prevailing culture in the world today shows the dirty American face in the Arab region, Europe, and Latin America...."
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